

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Survey No. BA 2744

Magi No. 0324445504

DOE ☐ yes ☒ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Belle Grove

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 12 Hillview Road Dr. ☐ not for publication

city, town Catonsville ☐ vicinity of Councilmanic District 1st congressional district 7th

state Maryland county Baltimore Co

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Noel M. Demos

street & number 12 Hillview Drive telephone no. (410) 788-2654

city, town Catonsville state and zip code MD 21228-2237

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Courts Building liber5386

street & number 401 Bosley Avenue folio273

city, town Towson state MD 21204

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title No previous listing.

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. BA 2744

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Belle Grove is a very large frame and clapboard Italianate Villa that was expanded and altered after the date of the woodcut shown in T. J. Scharf's county history. The house is three full stories with a central tower that reaches a fourth level. The tower was once topped by a cupola shown in Scharf's book but that feature subsequently vanished. In winter, the Baltimore harbor can be seen from the highest level of the tower.

The house has unusually large wooden brackets under the eaves. There is a full-width and wrap-around porch. The present owner believes that the woodcut in Scharf's book was out of date when published in 1881; since the drawing was executed, two bay windows have been added on the west side of the house; one bay contains a stained glass transom light with the date 1872.

This house was depicted with an elaborate formal garden with very low hedges, urns, and classic statuary. Howell family members provided the present owner with photographs of an estate greenhouse, elaborate plantings, and stone entrance posts located more than a block away on Frederick Road. This estate was a lush showplace for elegant living. Old photos show an elaborate carriage house.

Inside, everything is built of the best materials. The massive front door opens into a stair hall with a fireplace at the bottom of the stairs. On the left is a music room with an elegant fireplace mantel of oak or ash in a spindled style used by the Newport architects in the 1880s. The floor-to-ceiling window sashes roll up to disappear into the walls for summer cooling. The ceiling cornice is vaulted and bordered by a plain moulding on all four walls. The room to the rear of the music room is a modern bar with plank walls and an historic oak bar rescued from a Baltimore city saloon of Edwardian times. On the right side of the stair hall is a parlor with 13-½ foot ceilings, vaulted cornices, and a somewhat modern fireplace. This room has a bay window of trapezoidal layout, large, single-plate glass panes in the windows, and transoms on all three sides fitted with square stained glass windows. The dining room has another fireplace and its bay window is of rectangular layout with more stained glass transoms.

The stairway is a long straight ascent flanked by moulded plaster panels. The ballusters are painted white. The stairway begins at a typical, Victorian oak newell post seen in houses all over Baltimore County.

Maryland Historical Trust/
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

BA 2744
MHT Inventory No.

name of property: Belle Grove

Section number 7 Page 1

Some upstairs rooms retain fireplaces and wainscoating and chair rails. Although the first owner was a wallpaper manufacturer, there is almost no wall paper left in this house. The cellar is full of interesting features, including fireplaces, possibly for cooking and preserving or for boiling laundry. The house was once heated by hot air as various registers demonstrate. There is evidence of a self-stoking coal furnace that was later replaced. One prior owner installed an open cage elevator for an invalid relative; it still works, wound by steel cables driven by a motor in the cellar.

A 1920s Colonial Revival garage with clapboard walls and slate roof replaces the original carriage house. There was once a gas-generator and a water tank to serve the property before gas lines and water mains reached the area. There had been a separate house for a live-in caretaker.

This house was probably T-shaped in footprint when new, but it appears L-shaped in the Bromley atlases of 1898 and 1915.. The even more irregular footprint appeared in the 1954 subdivision plan that created the subdivision of "Hillview" (Plat Book No. 20, folio 4).



8. Significance

Survey No. BA 2744

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1853-1855 (est.) Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

H. Howell's house first appeared on the Rogerson map of ca. 1855 and again on the Catonsville portion of Martenet's 1860 map of Howard County. Since the house did not appear on James Slade's 1853 water supply map, it could possibly date from about 1853 to 1855. Yet Darius C. Howell acquired ownership of the ground only after the house had appeared on those maps. Four purchases of land were accounted for when the property passed out of the d family:

1858	from Fred Roloson	Deeds GHC 21:94
1859	from Amon Cate	GHC 26:21
1885	from John Gill	WMI 146:93
1885	from John Gill	WMI 146:277.

Darius C. Howell was listed in Wood's city directory for 1864 with a town house at 188 West Lombard Street (old numbering). Darius C. Howell & Brother were importers and manufacturers of paper hangings at 260 West Baltimore Street (old numbering). An unidentified clipping in the Diehlman file called Howell the largest manufacturer of wall paper in the nation, possibly in the world.

D.C. Howell's house was mentioned among thenotable villas along the horse-car line in the Baltimore Gazette of July 26, 1872. While the architect of this house is unknown, D.C. Howell engaged Thomas Dixon to design four warehouses at Sharp and Camden Streets (Sun, August 4, 1869).

A detailed drawing of the D.C. Howell villa appeared in Scharf's 1881 county history as a large fully developed Italianate design. The 1915 atlas showed the estate as Belle Grove, property of Herbert P. Preston

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceRegistration Form: include in this title block the
property name, county, and site/inventory numberMultiple Property Documentation Form: include the
name of the multiple property listingNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

BA-2744

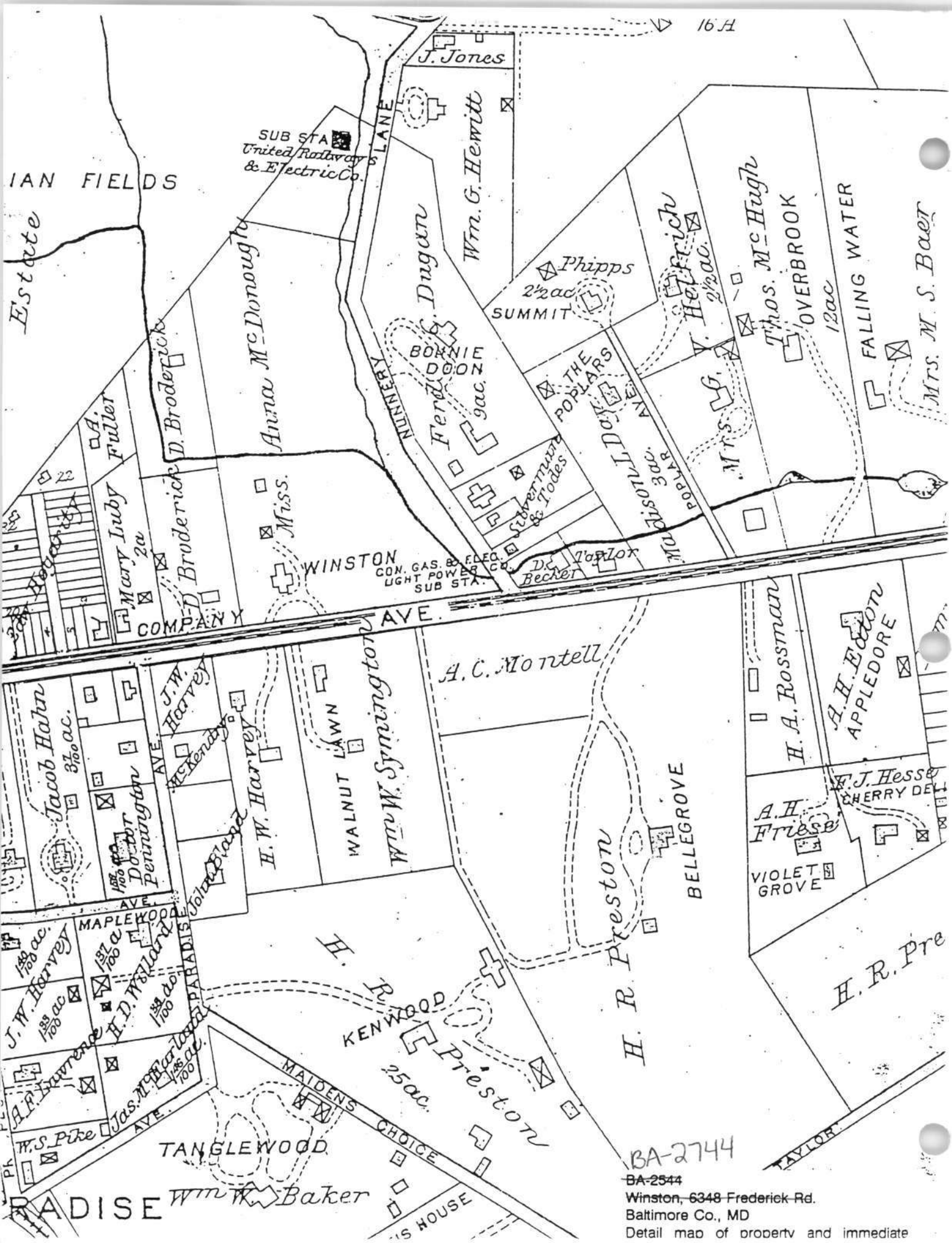
Section number 8 Page 1

Today the house survives, one of three or four square-towered dwellings left in this county, but the cupola has vanished. The full-width front porch and its wrap-around extensions survives. The woodcut in Scharf's history showed formal gardens, paths, hedges, urns, and classical statuary. The estate is much shrunken and the house stands on a cul-de-sac south of Frederick Road just west of the city line. "Hillview" subdivision was laid out in 1954 during the ownership of John W. Keen, et al.

Italianate villas were once plentiful, but their frame construction and large developable grounds have worked against their survival. Many of the houses were ungainly and boxy which also undermined their appeal. A good example of Italianate is fairly rare, especially from the earliest period. The house enjoyed no publicity until the publication of Orser and Arnold's 1989 book on the growth of Catonsville. (1)

NOTES:

1. Edward Orser and Joseph Arnold, Catonsville, 1880 to 1940, From Village to Suburb (Norfolk, Va., 1989), p. 27.



9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. BA 2744

Thomas J. Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County (Philadelphia, 1881), p. 824.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.2Quadrangle name Baltimore WestQuadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Tax Map 101, Grid 3, Parcel P672. Plat Book 20, folio 4, Lot 10 of "Hillview" subdivision.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

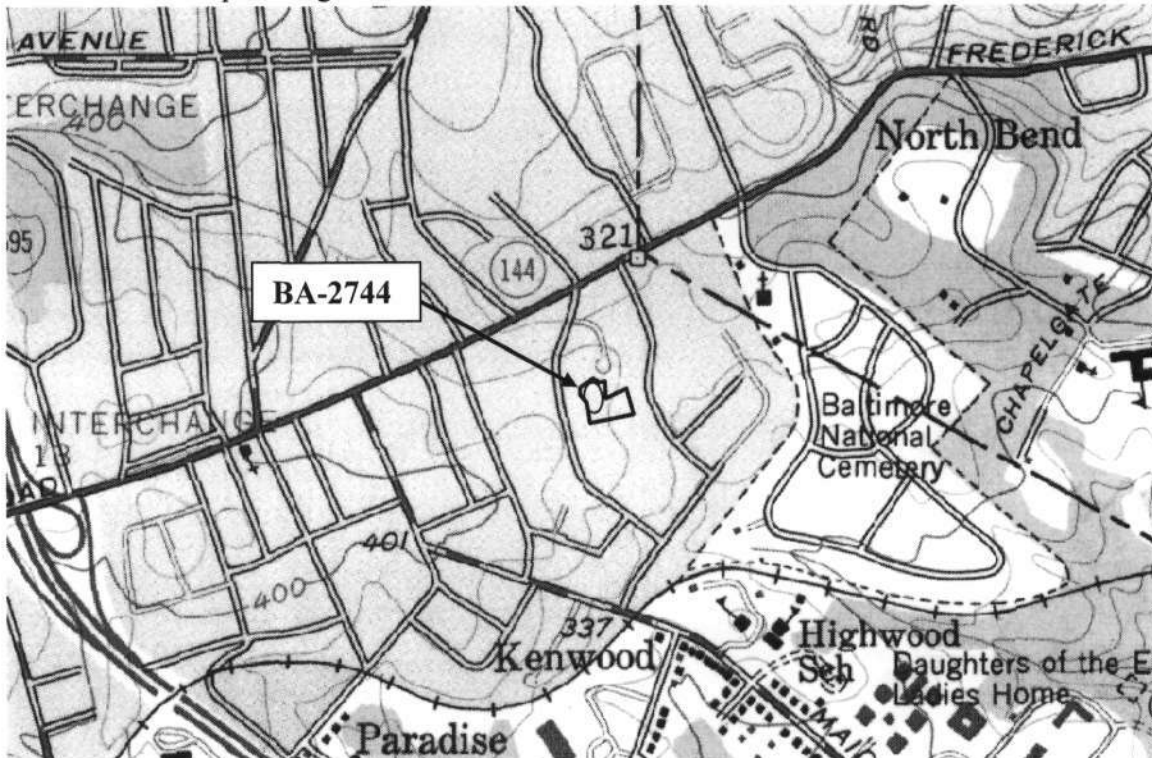
state None code county code

state None code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John McGrainorganization Office of Planningdate September 6, 1996street & number 401 Bosley Avenuetelephone (410) 887-3495city or town Towsonstate MD 21204

BA-2744
 Bellegrove (Belle Grove)
 12 Hillview Drive, Catonsville
 Baltimore West quadrangle



Mapquest aerial photo, c. 2007

Tax Map 101, p. 672, Lot 10

